

5 Feb 1970

Dear Harold:

Reply to your recent correspondence will come in instalments, of which this is the first, since my days lately have been crowded with other things and I have to write more or less on the run. Comments on Nichols will come later, for I would like to review the stuff carefully first. I just made copies of the correspondence that you sent, and mailed them to Gary. I did not understand that ~~you~~ you wanted me to pass them. In the future, make a special note of what is to be pass, and I'll copy and send.

399 memo: Your criticism is not unwelcome, but-- like Howard-- I think you misunderstood its intent. I did not mean it to be a complete review of 399, but to provide a succinct account of all that is necessary to know, and all that can be proved beyond doubt. I expect you to pad it with subsidiary comments to suit your needs.

Gunpowder on 399 base: There is a cheap way of affirming this with reasonable certainty, even without having the bullet in hand and under a microscope. All we need do is compare your picture with ~~others~~ the one's taken for Nichols after yours. If grains of gunpowder are embedded in the lead (as I firmly believe they are) they will appear in all photos. Dust will have shifted position. Such comparison won't produce absolute certainty, but will produce virtual certainty-- ~~which~~ which is close enough, I think.

Use of Nichols' pictures will eliminat the expense and trouble of having Archives make new photos.

I'm a little short on cash and may delay getting the pictures a little while, but I hope to send for them soon. When I get them, I'll make slides and pass them on.

399 base photo: The one that Archives sent me is the one reproduced in the memo. It is the one they took for you. As I explained previously, I have no recollection that Archives showed me any base photos when I was there, and I am pretty sure that they did not (a) because I do not remember any, and (b) because if they had showed me ~~the~~ such pictures, I would have orderd copies for myself.

399 squashing: 399 certainly was not squashed in a vice, as you questioned. If it had been, the sides of the bullet would not ~~be~~ taper the way they do. If only the base were squashed, then a transverse line (perpendiculat to the length of the bullet) would be evident on the sides.

Also, Howard's photo (the one in which 399 base appears with other bullets) shows the test bullet that Olivier fired through a goat carcas (without striking bone). That test bullet is squashed in a fashion like 399; it even has some of its lead core protruding like 399.

I am satisfied that 399 was squashed when it was fired into something, I don't know and can't guess what.

399 lead "lost": I still disagree that difference between your picture and ~~Howard's~~ Howard's indicate a difference in the bullet when the two pictures were taken. Two reasons: (1) the

differences appear to be differences ~~of~~ in the photographs, not in the thing photographed; (2) I think it impossible to remove such a minuscule amount without disrupting more of the lead-- indeed, I don't even think it's possible to remove only such a small amount. If there were a loose sliver of lead there, I'd say it could be worked off, but do not think it possible to scrape off such a tiny bit.

Seeing Nichols' pictures will easily settle this.

More later-- in a few days, at least.

cc. Roffman (maybe Schoener, too, if I ~~can~~ get to the Xerox-- I can only put two carbons in this typewriter)

ps. Zapruder slides: I am most interested in having slides, but don't want to commit myself until I know cost. Concerning cost, consider this as a possibility: Have prints made of all the frames, and send the prints to me for reproducing on slides. As you know, I get excellent quality, and can make blow-ups at no extra cost. I do not know whether this way will be cheaper for all in the long run, so you decide. To my mind, if the cost is the same, this method will be most convenient for us. 20 slides cost me \$3.50-- the overall cost would be somewhat less if I use 36-slide rolls; probably, too, I could get a discount if I buy in quantity. Also, if I have a set of prints in hand and can keep them here, I could fill special requests on demand. The quality of my slides would be equal to the quality of the prints, and I can make excellent blow-ups. Also, if I have the prints, I could put several on a single slide, so we may be able to save some money that way, too. How many I could get on a single slide depends on the size of the prints. I could put ~~four~~ four 8½x11 prints on a single slide, and more than four if I overlap prints so as to include only the area that shows the car.

If you can use me for this, I am at your disposal. You have to figure what is best in consideration of the cost. I think that in consideration of convenience using my slide making facility is best. You decide.